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DHS ANNOUNCES SITES FOR MULTI-BAND RADIO PILOT

Demonstrates new technology in real-world emergency response scenarios

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate today announced the 14 lead organizations for the upcoming pilot phase of testing and evaluation (T&E) for the Multi-Band Radio project. The pilots comprise the final phase of a three-part T&E process that includes laboratory testing, short-term demonstrations, and pilot projects.

In 2008, the DHS Science and Technology Directorate awarded a contract to demonstrate a multi-band radio that enables emergency responders—police, firefighters, emergency medical personnel and others—to communicate with partner agencies, regardless of the radio band on which they operate. Currently, radios only operate within a specific frequency band; subsequently, responders are often unable to communicate with other agencies and support units that operate in different radio frequencies. Comparable in size and weight to existing portable radios with similar features, multi-band radio would provide users with much-improved incident communications capabilities.

The pilot phase provides a unique opportunity for agencies to access the latest technology and implement it in their daily operations. Feedback from local, state, and federal participants during the first two phases was incorporated into a production-ready multi-band radio to be used for this pilot.

The 14 lead organizations in the pilot are:

- 2010 Olympic Security Committee (Blaine, Wash., and Vancouver, B.C. Canada)
- Amtrak (Northeast Corridor)
- Boise Fire Department (Boise, Idaho)
- Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group (Ottawa, ON Canada)
- Customs and Border Patrol (Detroit)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (Multiple Locations)
- Hawaii State Civil Defense (Honolulu)
- Interagency Communication Interoperability System (Los Angeles County, Calif.)
- Michigan Emergency Medical Services (Lower Peninsula Areas)
- Murray State University (Southwest Kentucky)

- Phoenix Police Department and Arizona Department of Emergency Management (Greater Phoenix and Yuma County)
- Texas National Guard (Austin, Texas)
- U.S. Marshals Service (Northeast Region)
- Washington Metro Area Transit Authority Transit Police (District of Columbia)

Each agency will conduct a minimum 30-day pilot in fall 2009. The pilots are designed to focus on the capabilities and effectiveness of the technology, with users primarily in a command-and-control role or involved in special operations with multiple entities. The agencies and sites were chosen to represent a broad range of communication environments. Factors such as operating bands, partner agencies and disciplines, interoperable conditions, and geographic landscapes were considered when selecting pilot sites.

Results will be documented at the conclusion of the test, and all findings and lessons learned will be published in a comprehensive report that is expected to be posted on the SAFECOM program Web site, www.safecomprogram.gov, in early 2010. The report will provide details to manufacturers about the needs of the response community and assist officials in making informed radio purchasing decisions in the future.

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Through a practitioner-driven approach, the Science and Technology Directorate's Command, Control and Interoperability Division (CID) creates and deploys information resources—standards, frameworks, tools, and technologies—to enable seamless and secure interactions among homeland security stakeholders. With its federal partners, CID is working to strengthen capabilities to communicate, share, visualize, analyze, and protect information.